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ABSTRACT

A model for integrating motivational activities into instruction and the problem with motivational activities in the classroom for the disadvantaged learner are examined. Eight basic learning processes are identified that the teacher should understand in preparation for presenting information to students: attention/reception, selective perception, rehearsal, semantic encoding, search and retrieval, response organization, feedback, and executive control. Motivational activities can help to gain the interest of the learner and make the task relevant to the learner. Four basic steps that should lead a teacher or instructional designer toward a definitive means of selecting appropriate motivational activities and incorporating them into instruction are considered. The first step is to determine the media needs of the learners (e.g., lower ability groups generally respond better to visual stimuli such as films, overheads, or displays). The second component of the model is derived from examining the prior decisions and entails such decisions as whether the motivational activity should focus on related past instruction, or whether remedial activities are needed. A next step is to examine the feasibility of that activity within the learning environment (i.e., the time and materials available), and the final step is to develop/select the actual motivational events of instruction. It is suggested that by examining the problem of motivation, identifying student characteristics, and carefully planning lessons, many of the motivational problems teachers face in the classroom can be overcome. A flowchart illustrating the steps in selecting motivational activities for instruction is appended. (SW)

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Integrating Motivational Activities Into Instruction: A Developmental Model

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ABSTRACT

The role of motivational activities in the classroom is an important one in context of the overall impact of the potential instruction. The needs and characteristics of learners that must be examined prior to instructional development often leave the developer (teacher or instructional designer) in a difficult position. Too often, what will motivate one learner will not have any effect on another. However, by examining the events of instruction and basic processes of learning, the selection of motivational activities is greatly facilitated. In essence, a generalizable model can be developed to help one account for these processes. This paper examines the problems with motivational activities in the classroom in terms of the disadvantaged learner. It also discusses some considerations for classroom management and finally, a model for the selection of motivational activities. The model suggested here is an open-ended one and can be altered and adapted to any instructional environment or developmental needs.

Integrating Motivational Activities Into Instruction: A Developmental Model.

Motivation and Learning to Learn

Motivation has been a long and enduring problem in the American educational system. The apparent inability of the classroom teacher to sufficiently motivate students to explore and develop an intrinsic appreciation of learning has fostered a reduction of basic skills competency and an increasing classroom management problem. For many years, classroom teachers have utilized certain systems of reward for students who can successfully master a particular learning task. Bolles (1978) identifies rewards that come in the form of a token, such as a coin or ticket, which can be cashed in by the student for a prize. This is a practice that is often seen at the primary level of education. Other rewards may include classroom rights to talk, go outside, or attend a certain school function. These types of rewards are seen more often at the secondary level of education, yet some systems offer no rewards at all. Both of these practices fall under the category of incentive motivation. In this category, the student is simply rewarded for the successful completion of the learning task.

Bates (1979) states that the problem with these types of token reward systems is that they may very well lead only to token learning. Considering that the American education system has failed to induce in students the intrinsic, phenomonological appreciation of learning, it hardly seems as though extrinsic

reward systems can induce the desire to learn. Bates also found in his research that this system could ultimately undermine the inherent desire to learn for learning's sake. Students lose focus, in essence, of the learning task; the goal of their work becomes the acquisition of the token and not the acquisition of the knowledge.

This effect on the non-traditional student is even more significant in terms of inducing learning appreciation. A learner who has little, materially, can certainly benefit from concrete rewards for satisfactory performance. The same learner, totally unmotivated in the conventional school setting, may perform extremely well in the token system learning environment where extrinsic rewards are attainable. Often, students will come to understand that other benefits of satisfactory performance will also result i.e. improved performance in the conventional setting, potential post-secondary school opportunities, and increased self-esteem. However, he may simply do enough to acquire the reward and not retain any new information at all. Nevertheless, one of the goals of any instructional program should be to induce exploration into further learning on one's own behalf. Instruction should be developed to include the necessary elements needed to induce a holistic attitude toward the continual acquisition of knowledge. This would facilitate learning in all areas and increase one's intrinsic desire to learn overall.

In serving the special needs of disadvantaged students, planning motivational activities plays an important role. The

disadvantaged student brings to the learning environment many intellectual, social, environmental, and economic characteristics which classify him as a special program student. Generally, the disadvantaged student tends to exhibit a lack of initiative in educational and academic pursuits. He/She may also show a motivational level which is basically inadequate for school or academic achievement. When faced with these problems, teachers must avoid saying that the disadvantaged student lacks readiness, motivation, and a learning system, as a description of their behavior and performance. This is a description of a disadvantaged student in a traditional learning environment. Teachers must avoid generalizing about the student as a person and focus on the needs of the student as a learner; this should be the goal of motivational activities in instruction.

Attitudinal factors should also be considered when planning for the disadvantaged student. Educational aspiration is greatly influenced by class values favoring the upper classes. Continually viewing non-traditional students through traditional values and academic dimensions is not a good idea. Youth motivated selectively can demonstrate creative aspiration in some environments yet not in others. However, this does not imply a lack of motivation. Recent literature dealing with locus of control and academic achievement has examined the learners view of himself in the classroom environment and its relationship to performance. Derived from social learning theory, it is postulated that an individual's experiences with learning

reinforcement can determine his pychological orientation or attitude to achievement. The internal (orientation) feels responsible for his actions where as the external (orientation) attributes life's occurrences to forces outside his control. Bigham and Bigham (1982) suggest a plan for increasing student internality which would consequently augment motivation in the classroom. They suggest providing a) activities to increase affiliation b) activities to increase internality c) structured learning environments for optimum learning. The specific model was developed for special program use to increase the likelihood of success for the new college student. However, the ideas are generic and can be adapted for use in other classes and in instructional development.

Model for Developing Motivational Activities

How a teacher/instructional designer selects motivational activities for the development of instruction is a difficult task because the problems associated with motivating the disadvantaged student are many. The instructor is placed in the precarious position of being both teacher and instructional designer. As a teacher, he is responsible for furnishing information as accurately as possible. Most teachers are full of information. Presenting material effectively, with motivational activities, poses a different problem. On the bottom-line, it is the hands-on instruction (handouts, texts, over-heads, worksheets, e.t.c.) that the student faces. To effectively prepare for motivational activities as part of instruction the teacher/instructional designer has some special

processes to examine.

Gagne and Briggs (1979) state that the purpose of instruction is to provide support to the processes of learning. It must be emphasized that learning is merely a process. No materials can cause learning; materials can only facilitate learning. Selected activities prior to formal instruction can induce the desire to obtain more related knowledge, but these activities, although part of the lesson plan, are not necessarily instructional in terms of the information that is needed to master the specific final performance outcome. An understanding of the basic learning processes can enhance the manner by which information is presented by teachers. The following eight processes have been identified as directly related to information processing:

1. Attention/Reception - determines the extent and nature of the reception and response of an incoming stimulus.
2. Selective Perception - discriminates the main features of a stimulus for storage in short-term memory.
3. Rehearsal - maintains and renews the information stored in the short-term memory.
4. Semantic Encoding - prepares information into coherent patterns for long-term memory.
5. Search and Retrieval - the process by which information is taken from storage and utilized in the working memory for a response.
6. Response Oganization - selects and organizes the final performance.

7. Feedback - initial stage of the reinforcement process.
8. Executive Control - the selection of cognitive strategies for application, understanding, and integration of information.

(*Derived form Principles of Instructional Design. Gagne and Briggs, 1979).

Gagne (1977) defines instruction as a set of events external to the learner which are designed to support internal processes of learning. Specifically, nine instructional events have been identified which correlate to the processes of learning. Among the nine events are two envents in the initial motivational phase of instruction: a) gaining attention and b) stating the objective. The gaining attention event supports the attention/reception process of learning. The statement of the objective calls upon the executive control process. Both of these events are important in propelling the learner to pursue information and achieve a particular task. It is during the motivation phase that the learner first encounters the learning task. The decisions a designer or teacher makes at this point are crucial in relation to the overall success of the instruction. It is at this point that the learner experiences the highest level of frustration with the instruction. This frustration determines the level of the student's success with the learning task.

During the gaining attention event, the learner develops an attitude toward the learning task. One of the prime factors in determining this attitude and limiting the frustration is

the essence of meaning (Ausubel, 1968). In order for a learning task to be meaningful, it should be as closely relatable as possible to knowledge, skills, and attitudes already possessed by the learner. The learner should possess as many relevant anchoring ideas as possible so that the learning task can maximize its meaning to the learner. The more relevant the learning task to the learners scope of knowledge, the lower the level of perceptual frustration encountered by the learner. It also augments the level of intrinsic exploration toward further study of the subject matter and can increase learning overall.

Stating the objective can, at times, be incorporated into the gaining attention event. Some teachers may prefer to state the objective first and susequently focus on the relevance and importance of the learning task. A procedure such as this is perhaps most effective with highly motivated and high ability learners. Lower ability learners, however, may require more rhetoric to relate the objective and enhance the meaning of a learning task. If this is done, they will be more ready to deal with the task and accept the objective. The rhetoric, called advanced organizers (Ausubel, 1963), could be a reading, lecture, or film. The use of advance organizers is founded almost exclusively in the gaining attention event of instruction and is very effective with lower ability learners.

At this point, motivational activities seem to be serving two purposes. One is to gain the interest of the learner and

increase the probability of him having a positive learning attitude toward the task. The other is to make the new task relevant to the learner. It must be meaningful to the learner and propel him into the specfic task and other related tasks. Thus there derives two questions to examine before selecting motivational activities. First, is the learner already interested in the content which is somewhat relevant or does the learner lack the relevance in order to take interest in the learning task at all? Decisions made from asking these questions will be integral in planning motivational activities into the events of instruction. First impressions are lasting ones. The designer of instruction should be certain that the instruction properly motivates the particular group of learners, at the right moment, for which the instruction is developed. One can go about making these motivational decisions in a very systematic way. The procedure consists of four basic steps which should lead a teacher/instructional designer toward a more definitive means of selecting appropriate motivational activities and incorporating them into instruction.

The first step is to determine the media needs of the learners. This can be done by examining all entry behaviors and other general characteristics of the learning group. Who are the learners? What related skills do they already possess? To what types of media do the learners give their best responses? For example, lower ability groups generally respond better to visual stimuli such as films, overheads, or displays. Higher ability groups may respond well to written text or lectures.

One must be certain to thoroughly examine all possibilities in terms of the learners. Often, several sub-lessons or activities may be required in order to orient the learner to the new information.

The second component of the model is derived from examining the prior decisions. After a clear description of the learners and the determining of their media needs, one must determine the type of motivational activity to be used. Will the activity be an advanced organizer? Will it focus attention on related past instruction? Are remedial activities needed? The activity must, in some way, make the new instruction meaningful or relevant to the learner. The type of activity should draw upon knowledge, skills and attitudes already possessed by the learner. By some means the activities must "link-up" with that prior knowledge. Bruner (1973) speaks of the further exploration of skills and the need for pedagogical structuring to call upon these skills. This, he says, leads toward positive activation and subsequent discover practices.

After examining the general characteristics to identify possible motivational activities, one must examine the feasibility of that activity within the learning environment. Is there enough time? Will the needed materials be available? This is the abort or continue stage. If more forces are pushing against you that are pushing for you, the teacher/instructional designer may have to backtrack and start over. The problem may be in the general cahracteristics and evaluation of entry behaviors. The type of activity selected may not fill the "void of meaning"

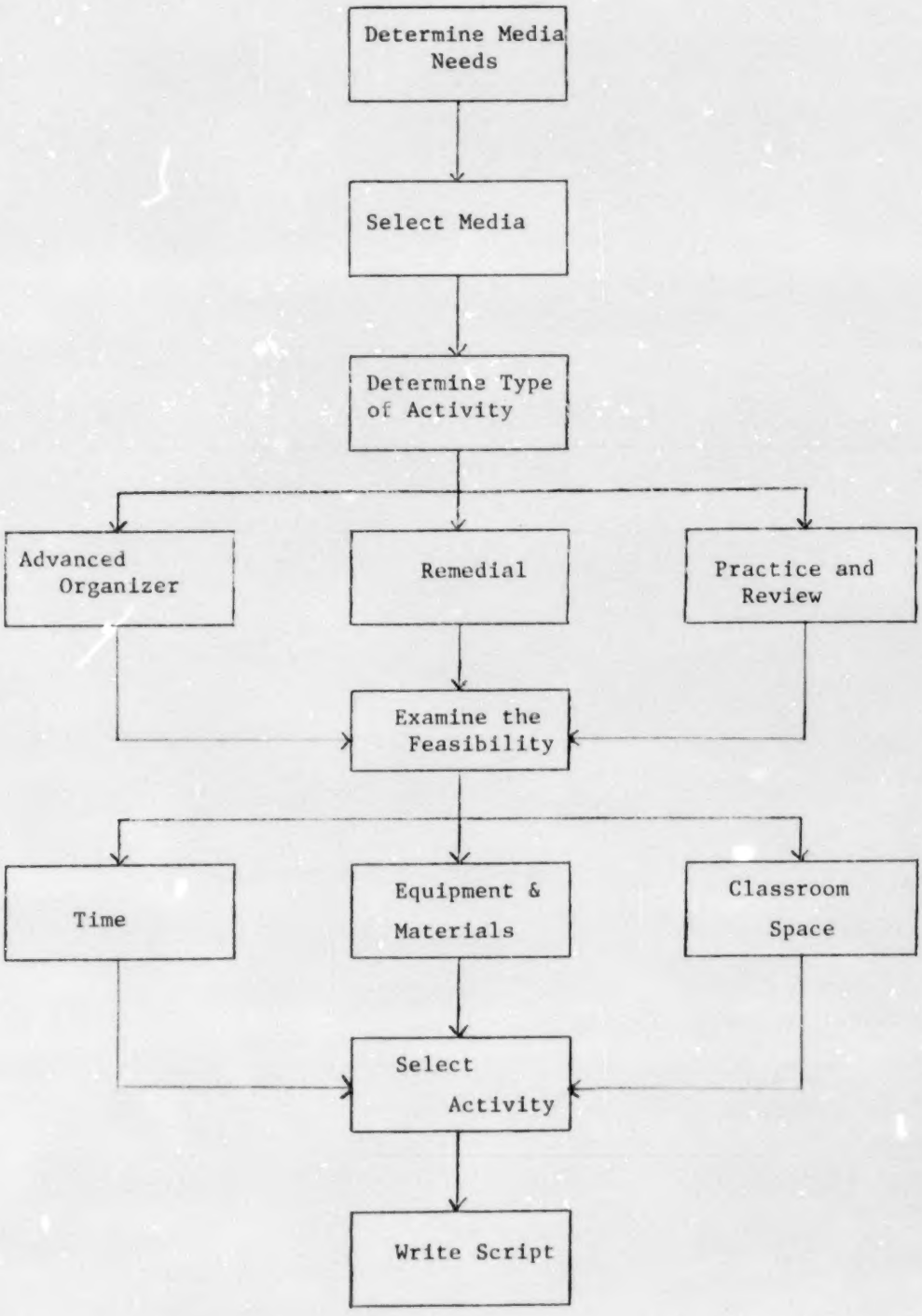
that propels the learner into further exploration. If a particular type of motivational activity does not fill this gap, then a re-evaluation of the learners in relation to the type of motivational activity may be needed. Failure to do this can cause increased learner frustration thus affecting the positive learning attitude and decreasing performance.

The final step is to develop/select the actual motivational events of instruction. This selection should, in essence, be simple the product of the three previous decisions. The events may include films, small group interaction, field trips, speakers, games, or other techniques. The events may also include a combination of activities. In such an instance the teacher/instructional designer should develop a script or concrete plan to follow during the actual presentation of the activities. Scripting is often a good way to assure certain information is presented and it also serves as a means to be consistent when a variety of groups are being taught. The motivational event is very dependent on the learner, the learning environment, and the type of motivation required. Without thoroughly investigating these components the most effective activity can not be developed.

This is an open-ended model. It can be expanded and built upon to meet the needs of any instructional/motivational environment. One must see it as a purely dogmatic decision-making process. By examining the problem of motivation, identifying student characteristics, and carefully planning lessons, one can overcome many of the motivational problems teachers

face in the classroom. As a result, students will succeed and not fail; teachers will teach and not fail. This should be our primary goal for instruction.

Flowchart: Selecting Motivational Activities for Instruction



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